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Six South Coast Communities Receive over \$104,000
from Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program

BOSTON – Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Ian Bowles today announced grants totaling \$104,479 to assist the city of New Bedford and five South Coast towns in their efforts to protect and restore Buzzards Bay. The grants, a combination of state and federal funds, were awarded through the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program in EEA's Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM).

"I am pleased to announce these grants, which will help six communities enhance coastal wetlands, conserve open space and improve the environmental quality of estuaries within the Buzzards Bay Watershed," Secretary Bowles said. "These funds are leveraging matching dollars from municipalities and private agencies for a variety of creative projects that protect and restore vital natural resources along the Commonwealth's South Coast."

The Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program (NEP) is one of 28 NEPs around the country. With federal funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency, the Buzzards Bay NEP works with communities to implement a management plan to protect and enhance the water quality and natural resources of Buzzards Bay and its surrounding watershed. Congress designated Buzzards Bay as an estuary of national significance in 1985. Every dollar awarded through the National Estuary Program's municipal grant program has been matched by \$2.50 in state, local, and private donations or in-kind services. For this round of grants, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection provided \$50,000.

The awards announced today include:

New Bedford - \$20,000 for an ongoing project to update the city's Geographic Information System data related to its stormwater and sewer systems. The city will continue to employ college-level engineering interns from UMass-Dartmouth to map stormwater, sewer, and combined sewer overflow systems.

Rochester - \$10,000 to complete a perimeter survey plan on 8.7 acres on the Rochester-Marion town line. The survey plan is a key component of the protection strategy for this property, which contains the Hathaway Pond dam, an anadromous fishway, more than 800 feet of frontage on the Sippican River, and more than 300 feet of riverfront on Doggetts Brook. The property abuts about 780 acres of permanently protected lands, including Eastover Farm. The town is partnering with the Rochester Land Trust, Sippican Lands Trust, The Coalition for Buzzards Bay and The Trustees of Reservations to protect the property and improve fish passage over the dam.

Marion - \$20,700 to perform a perimeter survey plan and legal work necessary to protect 16 acres that also abut Eastover Farm. The property, which contains significant wetlands and habitat, is at risk of being sold for development. The town is partnering with the Trustees of Reservations to acquire and permanently protect this property.

Acushnet - \$7,500 to hire a consultant to digitize wetland boundary lines located on parcels in town where the Conservation Commission has considered a permit application during the past five years, allowing the town to provide accurate information on wetland boundaries to homeowners, realtors and developers. The project will also help educate the public on the importance of wetlands. To keep the information current, the Conservation Commission will require that all future site plan submissions be in digital format.

Fairhaven - \$18,000 to assist in the creation of a prioritized stormwater capital improvement plan. The town will use this plan to integrate implementation of stormwater Best Management Practices with planned capital improvements, allowing it to better justify stormwater improvements when seeking funding through competitive grants or Town Meeting requests.

The town of **Mattapoisett** was selected to receive three grants:

- **\$7,100** to engage the services of a professional engineering firm to pursue federal permitting for the restoration of Eel Pond, a small coastal salt pond at the head of Mattapoisett Harbor. Eel Pond ranks as one of the most eutrophic embayments in Buzzards Bay and the town is involved in a multi-year effort to improve water quality, increase saltwater flows, and restore salt marsh fringing the pond.
- **\$6,750** to conduct the first phase (engineering feasibility study) of a three-phase plan to restore tidal flow to a 5.6-acre tidally restricted salt marsh. Largely owned by the town, the marsh is suffering reduced tidal flows because of an undersized culvert passing under Pico Beach Road. Reduced saltwater exchange has encouraged growth of the invasive common reed (*Phragmites australis*) and resulted in significant ponding of freshwater originating from ditches and overland flow.
- **\$14,429** to hire the Massachusetts Estuaries Project at UMass–Dartmouth to create a linked watershed/embayment model for nitrogen for the Mattapoisett Harbor system. This model will set total maximum daily loads for nitrogen, identify and locate nitrogen sources within the watershed, and predict how future land use changes will affect nitrogen loads and what mitigation measures can be used to maintain water quality and meet water quality standards.

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